

SCREENING ORDINANCE

(Staff Version)

SECTION 1: Purpose and Intent.

This legislation is designed to provide improve livability between different or dissimilar land uses by defining policy and standards regarding the placement, retention, or replacement of areas designated as screen borders or buffer areas. This legislation is further designed and intended to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public by requiring screen to accomplish the following:

- (i) Reduce the transmission of noise, dust, and glare;
- (ii) Lessen perceived visual pollution;
- (iii) Create a greater sense of privacy;
- (iv) Improve esthetics, by effectively landscaping a non-residential use;
- (v) Establish tree cover to improve regional air quality; and
- (vi) Provide tree cover to moderate temperatures and for localized shading.

SECTION 2: General Provisions

Enforcement

The provisions of this section are to be enforced with the following:

- a) a multifamily, office, commercial, or industrial construction permit representing new primary buildings or substantial addition of the primary structure;
- b) a new property plat of addition, replat or major developments; or
- c) an amendment to the official zoning map or provision of Special-Use permits.**

Enforcement shall follow Table A, "Buffering/Screening Dissimilar Land Uses", imposing specific screening with all new development to shield against intrusion of a nuisance and to shield existing nuisances. Acceptable plantings are to be those identified with Table B, "Adopted List of Screening Plants and Fencing Materials".

Definitions:

Buffers – Natural or manmade area of planted materials designed to separate use or zones.

Undisturbed Buffer - Do not disturb any vegetation in the buffer area. This buffer must maintain a 100% permeable surface to allow the transfer of water to subsurface soils. These areas may be supplemented by additional vegetation where existing plantings are thin and additional screening is desired. These areas may be crossed by utility access

Modified Buffer - Retention of all trees over 6-inch caliper in the buffer area. This buffer type shall maintain 70% permeable ground surface to allow water to subsurface soils. These areas may be supplemented by additional vegetation where existing plantings are thin and additional screening is desired.

Screen - Part of a buffer that is a physical or visual separator between dissimilar uses/zones.

Fences - Defined as structure over 2' in height, obstructing passage. All fences shall be constructed of exterior grade materials, such as treated pine, cypress, cedar, redwood, or other exterior materials.

Major Expansion – any addition in floor area equivalent to 5,000 square ft or greater than 50% of existing space.

Specific Requirements

Plans are required: A landscape plan is required with all building permits, plats or development reviews, rezoning or other use questions.

Commercial Parking Lot Shading: Deciduous shade trees shall be included in all new and expanded parking areas at **one tree per 6 (six) parking spaces**. The lower branches of shade trees shall be pruned at an appropriate time of year to provide area visibility. For example, a four-inch caliper tree shall be pruned during dormancy to provide at least seven feet of clearance from the ground to the lowest branch. The materials planted in the landscape strip may be included as part of the parking lot shading requirements.

Landscape Strips: For all Commercial, Office, Multifamily and Industrial parking areas. Where parking is oriented perpendicular to the planting strip, provide wheel stops to prevent overhang into the planting strips or add **two (2) feet** to the length of the strip.

Front Yard; provide a front yard planting and parking lot landscape strip, having a minimum width of **six (6) feet** between the right of way and the edge of the parking area. . Screening shrubs shall be maintained at a height of **two (2) feet**.

Side Yard; Provide a side yard landscape strip **four (4) feet wide** between the side property line and the edge of the parking area.

The front and side yard planting strips: shall be planted with shrubs and trees from Table B. Install shrubs at sufficient spacing to provide a continuous screen to **a height of two (2) feet** and to provide shading of the parking area

Screen / Buffer Types:

(See Appendix for examples)

Class A - Full or Opaque Screen / Buffer shall include an **eight (8) foot**, opaque screen and continuous tree spaced every 20 feet. Full buffers may include a wall or fence, landscaped berm, and plantings. The opaque portion must be opaque in all seasons.

Class B - Half or Semi-Opaque Screen / Buffer, with opaque screening for a height of **four (4) feet**, with intermittent obstructions for a least 20 feet.

Class C - Broken or Thin Screen / Buffer, Having intermittent visual obstructions to a height of at least 20 feet.

Class D - Parking Lot Shading, intended to provide tree cover that improve regional air quality; and to moderate temperatures and for localized shading

Class E - Parking Lot Screening; intended to provide a visual barrier between street and parking area.

BUFFERS

Buffers between dissimilar use: Buffers shall be established with new development activity to reduce the impact on existing neighborhoods and uses. Buffers provide a separation between dissimilar zones and uses according to the provisions of this ordinance, see Table A. The provisions apply to different land uses separated by streets and rights-of-way **and easements**. Streets and roadway rights-of-way **and easements** shall not be used in computing the depth of any buffer area. Buffer area dimensional requirements shall be:

- ☐ All required buffer areas shall not include any utility easement.
- ☐ Side and rear yard buffers: The buffer area shall be five percent (5%) of lot depth and width. Buffer areas shall not be less than (<) six feet (6') or greater than (>) forty feet (40').
- ☐ Opaque fencing screenings may be allowed along alleyways.
- ☐ Under certain conditions, up to a 100-foot buffer may be required when a new development or expansion of regional shopping center, major activity center or industrial district abuts an existing single-family, residential neighborhood.
- ☐ A larger buffer area shall be required between residential areas and commercial areas when the commercial development abuts a major roadway to reduce ambient noise levels, per the following: 70' Freeway and Expressways, 40' Arterial streets

Maintenance required:

- (1) Excessive annual pruning of plantings intended to provide buffers between dissimilar uses is prohibited.
- (2) It is recommended that a mulch of shredded bark or stone be applied in all landscaped areas to reduce moisture loss and to improve the appearance of plantings near streets.
- (3) **All landscape strips and modified buffer areas shall include an irrigation system.**

SECTION 3: Enforcement and Amendment

The provisions of this legislation are to be enforced as described in the general provisions section. These provisions apply to new multi-family, office, commercial, and industrial building permits constituting new primary buildings and major expansions, and should not be required with other residential building permits.

The Planning Commission shall review all screening or landscape plans for major expansions when added floor space created is greater than one-half (1/2) of the existing building square footage or additions at or above 5,000 square feet.

The North Little Rock City Council shall consider all requests for variance or modification of buffers, accompanied with the recommendation of the Planning Commission. Existing uses are encouraged to provide screening but are not subject to the provisions of this legislation, unless otherwise specified in the Zoning Ordinance for nuisance abatement.

All buffer areas and parking lot shading and screenings shall be installed during construction and shall be completed prior to the issuance of an occupancy permits with the exception that during severe summer drought conditions, a 60 day extension shall be allowed. Should the drought exist at the end of the extension, an additional 60-day extension may be allowed. Failure to comply with the provisions of this Ordinance may be the imposition of a fee sufficient to accomplish the provision by a reputable landscape architect or nursery. The Planning Director, Building Inspector or Code Enforcement Department shall be responsible for determining noncompliance. The Community Planning Department shall check for compliance after two years of initial plantings for compliance with this ordinance. **All deficiencies shall be corrected by the payment of fees sufficient for replacement.**

SECTION 4: Planting and Care Guide

- ☐ **All trees are to be 2 ½ “ caliper at time of planting.**
- ☐ Select the right plant for the location: Avoid planting trees within fifteen feet of overhead utility lines. Select trees of short height at maturity when planting near utility lines.
- ☐ Planting tips for trees and shrubs: Holes should be dug deep and wide. Set new trees so that the surface of the ball is just below soil level. Replant trees to the soil line. Soil should be loosened to allow root growth and expansion. Reserve soil for filling holes and mix replacement soil with compost. Best results come with fall or spring transplanting. Soak plants immediately after planting.
- ☐ Property owners are encouraged to prune trees to thicken lower branches, if screening is intended. Prune to reshape trees, shorten height, avoid conflict with utilities, eliminate dead or diseased wood, or to correct structural defects.

TABLE A:

Buffer / Screening of Dissimilar Land Uses

Existing Use by Intended Zoning Classification

New Use / Development		R1 & R2	R3	R4	R5 & R6	R0	RT1	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	I1	I2	I3
Single Family	R1 & R2	X	X	B	C	C	A	B	A	A	A	A	X	A	A	A
Duplex	R3	X	X	C	X	X	A	B	A	A	A	A	X	A	A	A
Multi-family	R4	B	C	X	X	X	A	B	B	A	A	A	X	A	A	A
Condominium etc.	R5 & R6	C	X	X	X	C	A	B	B	A	A	A	X	A	A	A
Zero Lot Single Family	R0	C	X	X	C	X	B	C	B	A	A	A	X	A	A	A
Mobile Home Park	RT1	A	A	A	A	B	X	A	A	A	A	A	X	A	A	A
Quiet Office	C1	B	B	B	B	C	A	X	B	C	B	B	X	A	A	A
Neighborhood Retail	C2	A	A	B	B	B	A	B	X	X	B	X	X	C	B	A
Regional Retail	C3	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	X	X	B	X	X	B	B	A
Unfortunate Commercial	C4	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	C	C	X	X	X	C	C	B
Downtown Commercial	C5	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	B
Central Business District	C6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	B
Lightest Industrial	I1	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
Light Industrial	I2	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	C	X	X	X	X	X
Heavy Industrial	I3	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	X	X	X

Definitions:

A = Full, Opaque screening;

B = Half screening;

C = Thin screen

X = No screen required

TABLE B
Plantings and Materials List

Plants should be selected based on:

1. Ability to serve the intended purpose, (limited height, provides proper screening or shading);
- 2. Be of low maintenance (The tree should be sturdy during storms without nuisance leaves or fruit.);**
3. Fit the climate (North Little Rock is in climate Zone 7); and
4. Fit the site regarding sun, soil, and moisture conditions.

The following plants are described by type of plant name, common name, botanical/latin name, growth rate and recommended cultivar.

Tree A: Trees over 50' Tall

Common Name	Botanical Name	Growth Rate	Recommended Cultivars
Norway Maple	Acer platanoides	Moderate	"Cleveland", "Summer Shade"
Red Maple (N)	Acer rubrum	Fast	"Autumn Flame", "Lilford", "Red"
Katsura Tree*	Cercidiphyllum japonicum	Fast	
Seedless Green Ash (N)	Fraxinus pennsylvanica lanceolata	Fast	"Marshall's Seedless", "Newport" "Summit"
Ginkgo (Male)	Ginkgo biloba	Slow	"Autumn Gold", "Lakeview", "Mayfield"
Kentucky Coffee Tree (N)	Gymnocladus dioica	Moderate	
Tulip Poplar* (N)	Liriodendron tulipifera	Fast	
Sycamore* (N)	Platanus occidentalis	Fast	
London Plantree	Plantanus x acerifolia	Moderate	
Sawtooth Oak	Quercus acutissima	Moderate	
Red Oak	Quercus borealis	Moderate	
Scarlett Oak (N)	Quercus coccinea	Fast	
Shumard Oak	Quercus shumardii		
Bald Cypress (N)	Taxodium distichum	Moderate	
Japanese Zelkova	Zelkova serrata	Fast	"Parkview", "Village Green"
Lacebark Elm	Ulmus parvifolia	Moderate	
Water Oak (N)	Quercus nigra	Moderate	

These large natives require space and need planting where leaf drop is not objectionable. *Katsura Tree-use single trunk only. Growth rates: slow Bless than 1@ per year: Moderate 1-2 inches per year, Fast- more than 2 inches per year. (N) denotes native tree

Tree B: Trees 30= to 50' Tall

Common Name	Botanical Name	Growth Rate	Recommended Cultivars
Turkish Filbert	Corylus colurna	Moderate	
Thornless Honey Locust (N)	Gleditsia triacanthos inermis	Fast	A Skyline®, A Shademaster®,
Blackgum (N)	Nyssa sylvatica	Slow	
Little Leaf Linden	Tilia cordata	Moderate	A Greenspire®
Silver Linden	Tilia tomentosa	Moderate	
Japanese Pagoda Tree	Sophora japonica	Fast	

Growth rate: slow less than 1 in. per year: moderate 1-2 in. per year: fast more than 2 in. per year (N) denotes native tree

Tree C: Trees less than 30' Tall

Common Name	Botanical Name	Growth Rate	Recommended Cultivars
Trident Maple	Acer buergerianum	Slow	
Ironwood (American Hornbeam) (N)	Carpinus caroliniana	Slow	
Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn	Crataegus crusgalli	Moderate	
Washington Hawthorn (N)	Crataegus phaenopyrum	Moderate	A Clark®
Winter King Hawthorn	Crataegus viridis	Moderate	
Goldenrain Tree	Koeleruteria paniculata	Moderate	
Crepe Myrtle	Lagerstroemia indica	Fast	A Cherokee®, A Muskogee®,
Hop Hornbeam (N)	Ostrya virginiana	Slow	
Persian Parrotia	Parrotia persica	Moderate	
Chinese Pistache	Pistacia chinensis	Slow	
Japanese Maple	Acer Palmatum	Moderate	
Red Bud	Cercis Canadensis		
Dogwood	Cornus florida		

*Questionable street tree for urban street. Growth rate: slow less than 1 in. per year; moderate 1-2 in. per year; fast more than 2 in. per year. (N) denotes native trees

Tree D: Evergreen Trees Over 30' Tall

(Variety of Evergreen trees is encouraged)

Common Name	Botanical Name	Growth Rate	Effective Height
Eastern Red Cedar **	Juniperus virginiana	Moderate	40=-50=
Southern Magnolia (N)	Magnolia grandiflora	Slow	60=-80=
Austrian Pine	Pinus nigra	Moderate	50=-60=
Eastern White Pine (N)	Pinus strobus	Moderate	60=-80=
Scotch Pine	Pinus sylvestris	Fast	60=-90=
Loblolly Pine*	Pinus taeda	Fast	60=-90=
Japanese Black Pine	Pinus thunbergii	Moderate	30=-50=
Virginia (Scrub) Pine (N)	Pinus virginiana	Moderate	20=-40=
Southern Live Oak	Quercus virginiana		
Slash Pine	Pinus elliottii		
Shoot Leaf	Pinus echinata		

Tree E: Evergreen Trees Less than 30' Tall

(Variety of Evergreen trees is encouraged)

Common Name	Botanical Name	Growth Rate	Effective Height
Foster Holly #2	Ilex xattemuata :Fosteri #2@	Moderate	25=-30=
Savannah Holly	Ilex xattenuata ΔSavannah@	Moderate	25=-30=
Yaupon Holly	Ilex vomitoria	Moderate	12=-15=
Nellie R Stevens Holly	Ilex x Nellie R. Stevens	Fast	
Cherry Laurel	Prunus caroliniana	Fast	20=-30=
Burford Holly	Ilex Cornuta Burfordii	Moderate	
Chinese Photia	Photia serrulata	Moderate-Fast	20=-25=

Loses lower limbs-underplant ** Easily transplanted, many cultivars, including ΔCanaerti@, ΔGlauca@ Growth rate: slow less than 1@ per year: Moderate 1-2 in. per year: fast more than 2 in. per year. (N) denotes native tree

Shrub A:

(Easily maintained @ 3' to 4' height)

Common Name	Botanical Name	sun	shade	Recommended varieties
Edward Houcher Abelia	Abelia Edward Goucher	X	X	
Wintergreen Barberry	Berberis julianae	X	X	
Japanese Boxwood	Buxus microphylla	X	X	ΔKoreana@ Wintergreen@
Manhattan Euonymus	Euonymus kiautschovicus	X	X	ΔManhattan@
Dwarf Burford Holly	Ilex cornuta	X	X	Burfordii Nana
Dwarf Horned Holly	Ilex cornuta	X		Compacta rotunda
Japanese Holly	Ilex crenata	X	X	ΔCompactia@, Green Island@,
Dwarf Yaupon Holly	Ilex vomitoria	X	X	Nana
Dwarf Pfitzer Juniper	Juniperus chinensis	X		ΔCompact Pfitzer@
Dwarf Yaupon	Ilex vomitoria Δnana@			
Dwarf Chinese Holly	Corunita Rotunda			
Dwarf Abellia	Abelia X grandiflora			Sherwood
Gumpo Azalea	Rhododendron Indicum (gumpo)			Gumpo pink, Gumpo white
Andorra Juniper	Juniperus horizontalis (plumosa)			
Dwarf Nandina	Nandina domestica			Harbor Dwarf, Fire Power, Gulf Stream

Shrub B:

(Easily maintained @ 6= to 8= height)

Common Name	Botanical Name	sun	shade	Recommended varieties
Needlepoint Holly	Ilex cornuta	x	x	Needlepoint
Box Leaf Holly	Ilex crenata	X	x	ΔBuxifolia@
Brilliant Holly	Ilex x aquipernyi	x	x	ΔBrilliant
Wax Myrtle	Myrica cerifera	x	x	
Gulf Tide Osmanthus	Osmanthus heterophylus	x	x	ΔGulftide@
Burkwood Viburnum	Viburnum x Δburkwoodii@	x	x	
Willowood Viburnum	Viburnum x rhytidophylloides		x	ΔWillowood@

Shrub C

(Easily maintained @8= to 15= height)

Common Name	Botanical Name	sun	shade	Recommended varieties
Thorny Eleagnus	Elaeagnus Pungens	X	X	AFruitlandii@
Nellie R. Stevens Holly	Ilex x Nellie R Stevens	X	X	Burfordii
Chinese Holly	Ilex cornuta	X	X	ABurfordii@, ANellie R. Stevens@
Dr. Kassab=s Holly	Ilex x ADr. Kassab@		X	
Yaupon Holly	Ilex vomitoria	X	X	
Fraser=s Photinia	Photinia x AFraseri@	X		
Leatherliaf Viburnum	Viburnum rhytidophyllum		X	
Carolina Cherrylaurel	Prunus Caroliniana	x	x	

Native plants for a naturalized screen in shade

Deciduous Ornamental

Trees

Common Name	Botanical Name	size	remarks
Wild Plum	Prunus americana	30 "	
Sweet Bay	Magnolia virginiana	30"	Semi-evergreer
Ironwood	Carpinus caroliniana	20 "to 30"	Slow growth
Paw Paw	Asimina triloba	20 "to 25"	
Service Berry	Amelanchier arborea	20 "	
Red Bud	Cercis canadensis	20 "	Showey spring flowers in sun or partial shade
Flowering Dogwood	Cornus florida	20 "	
Hop hornbeam	Ostrya virginiana	20 "	Slow growth; flakey bark
Red Buckeye	Aesculus pavia	15 "	Slow growth;showy spring flowers
Devils Walking Stick	Aralia spinosa	15 "	Thicket forming
False Indigo	Amorpha fruticosa	8 "	

Evergreen

Common Name	Botanical Name	size	remarks
Eastern Red Cedar	Juniperus virginiana	50 '	Grows well in sun
Yaupon Holly	Ilex vomitoria	20 '	

Native plants for a naturalized screen in shade

Deciduous Ornamental Trees

Common Name	Botanical Name	size	Remarks
Sweet Gum	Liquidambar styraciflua	100=	Outstanding fall color
Oaks	Quercus species	60'	Naturally occurring throughout region
River Birch	Betula nigra	50=	Fast growth; tolerates shade and wet
Persimmon	Diospyros virginiana	50=	
Osage Orange	Naclura pomifera	40=	Plant close to produce thorny hedge; male
Sassafras	Sassafras albidum	40=	Forms dense thicket; good sound barrier
Fringe tree	Chionanthus virginicus	25=	
Rough Leaf Dogwood	Cornus drummondii	20=	Forms dense thicket
Chickasaw Plum	Prunus angustifolia	10=	
Smooth Sumac	Rhus glabra	10=	Fall colors
American Filbert	Corylus americana	8=	Taller when found in natural habitat; forms
Flameleaf Sumac	Rhus copallina	8=	outstanding fall color
Coralberry	Symphoricarpos orbiculatus	5=	Attractive fruit; shade tolerant